

MWR Events



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talion. At their home base Camp Lejeune, N.C., they serve as India Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment of the 2nd Marine Division.

Welker said it was challenging, but being there with his brothers in arms was the greatest help. The Venedocia, Ohio, native received a Navy Achievement Medal with Combat "V" for valor.

"It was good to be there with all the other Marines. When you go to war with them it's a different thing," said Welker, a rifleman with I Co., 3/2. "We talked about home and shared good stories to keep the morale up. Everybody stuck together, we're even more like brothers now."

As Task Force Tarawa moved north toward its ultimate goal of Baghdad, the Marines said they were uncertain of what they might face, but said they relied on their training. Each of the award recipients attributed their decoration to the men who served under their charge.

"I was nervous at first, but my Marines knew exactly what to do. They're definitely why I got awarded," said Cpl. Michael J. Ahern, a Helena, Mont., native, who served as a team leader and received a certificate of commendation.

When these infantrymen are stateside and are preparing for war, they carry the responsibility of looking out for each man their junior. However, when it is time to employ what they have practiced, that accountability is greatly increased.

"I was a new team leader at the time, and it was like now you have these guys under you, that was a big responsibility all of a sudden," explained Cpl. Kevin J. Fisher, who was awarded a certificate of commendation. "It added to the whole stressful situation."

The rifleman, a native of Lockport, N.Y., said rapid movement while in Iraq added to that stress and con-

fusion. Here he said the Marines are in a more stationary position, but are able to apply things they learned there.

"Checkpoint operations we did in Iraq are similar to what we're doing at the entry control point. What we learned there was being assertive," said Fisher.

Much of their experiences Marines will pass to their replacements. "[We will] train them for how to search the people, the language – some key phrases," he said.

In all, Task Force Betio awarded five certificates of commendation for actions in Iraq. The recipients not mentioned above were Cpls. Manuel R. Andrade Jr. and Michael A. Hastillo and Lance Cpl. Kristopher C. Borch. Lance Cpl. Steven A. White also received a certificate of commendation for his actions in Kuwait.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy R. Lundgren and Sgts. Christopher M. Reith, Lathan E. Thurman, Michael D. Bradley, and Rudy S. Ontiveros were awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat "V". Cpl. Agustin L. Gonzalez was also awarded the Navy Achievement Medal.

In all, the task force awarded five Navy Commendation Medals – four with "V"s.

First Lt. Jon T. Widman received his for serving as company commander from "the line of departure" in Kuwait to An Nasiriya. Commanding an infantry company as a first lieutenant is something unheard of, said Brazeal, who also received a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V", his second time receiving the award. At An Nasiriya, Widman relinquished command of Company I to Capt. Charles R. Cassidy, who received two of the medals – one with combat distinguishing device and one without. Gunnery Sgt. Tuan V. Pham also received the award with "V" for valor.

The company's replacements arrived here Feb. 5. Company K, also of 3/2, will spend the next week and a half receiving a turnover before fully taking on the responsibility of protecting the camp. They too deployed with Task Force Tarawa and plan to employ some of the skills they learned there.

Movie Schedule

Tonight: Total Recall
Tuesday: Mystery Movie
Wednesday: Enemy at the Gate
Thursday: Juwanna Man
Friday: Friday the 13th
Saturday: John Q
Sunday: Barber Shop
Movies begin at 7 p.m.

Tournament Schedule

Tonight: Ping Pong
Tuesday: Pool
Wednesday: Bingo
Thursday: Foosball
Friday: Spades
Saturday: Dominoes
Sunday: 2 on 2 Volleyball
Tournaments start at 8 p.m.

Passport and Promotion Photos

Sgt. Melinda Munoz takes passport and promotion photos on Saturday from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the Public Affairs office. Emergency photos are by appointment only. Call 824-2343 or 839-905 (cell) to schedule an appointment.